DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 961 SO 012 504

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TITLE The Relationships among Sex Role Orientations, General Attitudes Toward Women, and Specific Attitudes Toward Women in a Managerial Role.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 20p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 7-12, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Androgyny: *Attitude Measures: *Females: Identification (Psychology): Males: *Managerial Occupations: Psychological Studies: Research Needs: Sex Differences: Social Science Research

ABSTRACT

Results are reported of a study to determine whether androgynous persons (characterized as lacking stereotypic concepts of maleness and femaleness) have more positive attitudes toward women than persons of other sex role orientations. Specifically, the study examines attitudes toward appropriate societal roles and the appropriate role of women in managerial professions. The sample consisted of 77 male and 124 female graduate students in education. Data were collected using 1) the Bem Sex Role Inventory which measured androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated sex role orientations: 2) the Attitude Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich): 3) the Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scale (Peters, Terborg, and Taynor): and 4) a questionnaire which measured subjects' perception of their androgyny on a scale from one to ten. Results indicated that androgynous students were not significantly more liberal toward women either in an unspecified or specified occupational role than were those identified as masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated. These results raised the issue as to whether the possession of sex-linked traits implies any particular type of attitude toward the role of women. The question of the validity of the Bem Sex Role Inventory is also raised. The conclusion is that more research is needed into how organizational variables such as superordinate, subordinate, and peer expectations, reward systems, and status systems influence attitudes and behavior toward women. (KC)

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The Relationships Among Sex Role Orientations, General Attitudes Toward Women, and Specific Attitudes Toward Women in a Managerial Role

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presented at

The American Educational Research Association's Convention

April 7 - 12, 1980

Boston, Massachusetts

SP 012 504

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The Relationships Among Sex Role Orientations,
General Attitudes Toward Women, and Specific Attitudes
Toward Women in a Managerial Role

The traditional sex role orientations of masculinity and femininity have been recently criticized as limiting and dysfunctional perspectives for sex role development in both males and females. Traditionally, femininity has been associated with socio-emotional or expressive behaviors, while masculinity has been associated with instrumental or task-oriented behaviors. Women have been assumed to be sensitive, nurturing, and emotional. Men are stereotyped as objective, logical, and competitive.

Researchers have reported, however, that high levels of masculinity in males and high levels of femininity in females do not facilitate psychological health or social adjustment and, in fact, may be harmful. Highly masculine boys have been described as having less self-acceptance, less capacity for status, less introspection, and less leadership potential (Mussen, 1962). These highly masculine boys have been found to be anxiety-ridden, guilt-prone, and neurotic (Harford, 1967). The negative impact of high masculinity in adult males has been discussed by Fasteau (1974) and Farrell (1974). Highly masculine males have been criticized as lacking interpersonal competence which renders them unable to relate to the feelings of others, unable to effectively articulate words of empathy, and often silent about their inadequacies and fears. High femininity in females has been associated with high anxiety and low self-acceptance (Block, 1976), low self-esteem (Bem,

1977; Spence, 1975) and lack of assertion (Bem, 1975; Falbo, 1977).

Out of these concerns for traditional sex role socialization developed the concept of psychological androgyny. Sandra Lipsitz Bem of Stanford University, the primary proponent of this theory, has proposed that masculinity and femininity are not dichotomous constructs at opposite ends of a single dimension, but masculinity and feminity represent "complementary domains of positive traits and behavior that can be embodied in one person" (Bruck, 1977). Through the use of an instrument that she developed, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), Bem has identified four classifications for sex role orientation -- masculine, feminine, undifferentiated, and androgynous. Masculine and feminine sex role orientations are the traditional types previously described. An undifferentiated sex role orientation is neither strongly masculine nor feminine in nature. A person with an androgynous sex role orientation is capable of behaving in integrative feminine and masculine ways. It is possible for these persons to be both instrumental and expressive, assertive and compassionate, independent and dependent, a leader and a follower; the behavior selected depending upon the appropriateness of the situation. The concept further implies that androgynous individuals are capable not only of choosing situationally appropriate masculine or feminine behavior, but that these individuals are able to blend these modalities into a single act (Bem, 1977).

It has been theorized that androgynous persons have transcended or rejected traditional sex role socialization which stereotypes behavior as masculine or feminine. Bem (1976) explained, "The behavior of

androgynous individuals escapes the prediction of traditional bipolar/ biological models." Maracek (1977) concurred:

> Androgynous individuals hold self-concepts that are independent of stereotypic concepts of maleness and femaleness. Their behavior reflects their openness to all elements of the human personality, regardless of whether they are conventionally viewed as same sex or cross sex. (p. 199)

Bem implies from her research that the BSRI can measure general sex role flexibility and hence assumes that androgynous persons will not be sex-typed in role behaviors (Spence and Helmreich, 1979). Bem has concluded from her studies that androgynous males and females are not restricted in their behavior by traditional sex role stereotypes. These persons are described as avoiding no behavior simply because the behavior was perceived to be traditionally masculine or feminine in nature (Bem and Lenney, 1976; Bem, 1975; Bem, 1974; Bem, Martyna, and Watson, 1976).

In addition to assumed differences in behavior, Bem (1979) also implies that individuals of different sex roles differ in the content of their beliefs or attitudes about the nature and extent of sex differences. It is the purpose of this study to investigate this assumed relationship between sex role orientation and attitudes toward women. Specifically, do androgynous persons, who are characterized as lacking stereotypic concepts of maleness and femaleness, have more positive attitudes toward women than persons of other sex role orientations?

Two dimensions of attitudes toward sex differences are explored -- attitudes toward women in an unspecified role and attitudes toward women in a specified role. Role theory indicates that peers, subordinates, and superordinates perceive persons differently when they interact with them as an individual personality and as an occupier of a role. Getzels, Lipham, and Campbell (1968) & Argyris (1957) indicate that these perceptions are often conflicting and incongruent. This study attempts to examine attitudes toward women in general (beliefs about their appropriate societal role) and attitudes toward women specifically (beliefs about their appropriate occupational role). The author chose to investigate attitudes toward women in a managerial role based on research findings that the perceived characteristics of successful managers have consistently been associated with men rather than women (Schein, 1973, 1975; Bass, Krusell, adn Alexander, 1971; Rosen and Jerdee, 1973, 1974; Massengill and DiMarco, 1979).

The following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis Number One

Androgynous graduate students of education are significantly more liberal in their general attitudes toward women in an unspecified occupational role than are graduate students of education who endorse masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated sex role orientations.

Hypothesis Number Two

Androgynous graduate students of education are significantly more liberal in their attitudes toward women in an occupationally specific role than are graduate students of education who endorse masculine, feminine,

or undifferentiated sex role orientations.

Sample

The sample consisted of 201 graduate students enrolled in twelve education courses in an urban, southeastern university during the Fall Quarter of 1978. There were 77 (38.3%) males and 124 (61.7%) females. Sex role orientations were classified by use of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. This classification resulted in the identification of 31 (15.45%) androgynous types, 60 (29.9%) masculine types, 61 (30.3%) feminine types, and 49 (24.4%) undifferentiated types. These persons included 45% of the sample who were sex typed (masculine males and feminine females), and 15% who were sex reversed (feminine males and masculine females).

The subjects ranged from the age of 21 to 58 years, with a mean age of 34 and a median age of 33. Seventy-six percent (152) of the sample were white and 24% (49) were black. The subjects' income ranged from $3,000 to $30,000 with a mean income of $15,015.

The majority of the sample population were married, had no children, were enrolled in a masters degree program, had mothers who were not employed full time, were employed as public school teachers, and aspired for the principalship as an ultimate occupational goal.

Three instruments and a questionnaire were administered to the students in class. Participation was strictly voluntary and the purposes of the study were revealed after the data had been analyzed.

Method

Data were analyzed with the entire population (n = 201) and with a subpopulation of this sample (n = 80) which represented pure types for each sex role orientation. The masculine pure types (10 males and 10 females) were those subjects whose masculinity scores represented the ten highest ranking scores of all the masculine types for that sex. The feminine pure types (10 males and 10 females) were those subjects whose femininty scores were the highest ranking. Androgynous pure types (10 males and 10 females) were those subjects whose combined masculinity and femininity scores were the ten highest ranking for that sex, and the undifferentiated pure types (10 males and 10 females) were those subjects whose combined masculinity and femininity scores were the ten lowest ranking scores.

This procedure was employed in an effort to eliminate subjects whose sex role orientation was not strongly associated with the orientation derived from Bem's scoring method. In addition, this process addressed some issues presented by challengers of Bem (Strahan, 1975; Kelly and Worell, 1977; Orlofsky et al, 1978; Spence et al, 1975; Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979) concerning the method of classifying subjects into particular sex roles, the scoring procedures, and the general reliability of the instrument.

Procedure

Data were collected from the subjects using the following instruments:

1. The Bem Sex Role Inventory -- a measure of androgynous, masculine, femining, and undifferentiated sex role orientations (BSRI);

2. The Attitudes Toward Women Scale by Spence and Helmreich (1972) --

a measure of attitudes toward women in an unspecified occupational role (AWS);

3. The Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scale by Peters, Terborg, and Taynor (1974) -- a measure of attitudes toward women in a specified occupational role (WAMS);

4. A researcher designed questionnaire -- an instrument for self report data concerning subjects' perceptions of their androgyny on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high); subjects' perception of their comfort in performing cross sex-typed activities (sex role flexibility); and subjects' rating of the positiveness of androgynous behavior. In addition, demographic, occupation-related, and academic information was collected from this instrument.

The hypotheses were tested by use of 2 x 4 ANOVA with the entire sample (N = 201) and the sample of pure types (N = 80). Factor A was the variable sex (male, female) and Factor B, the variables sex role orientation (androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated). The dependent variables were the subjects' scores on the AWS and WAMS.

Additional analyses were performed in order to further test the hypotheses. One-way analyses of variance were performed with the dependent variables, Attitudes Toward Women and Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scales, and the independent variables, the subjects' perceptions of their own androgynous behavior, their sex role flexibility, and the positiveness of androgyny.

Results

The analyses of the data using the entire sample (n = 201) and the sample of pure types (n = 80) did not confirm hypothesis one or hypothesis two. The data discussed below will focus on the smaller sample (n = 80)

of pure types in an effort to concentrate on those persons who were clearly associated with Bem's operational definitions of the four sex role orientations.

Hypothesis One (See Table 1, p. 13)

Androgynous students were not significantly more liberal in their attitudes toward women in an unspecified occupational role than were graduate students identified as masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated. Female subjects were significantly more liberal than males in their attitudes toward women in an unspecified occupational role ($F = 7.568$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$).

The Newman-Keuls procedure was employed to identify the significant interactions of sex role orientation and sex. Three significant interactions at the .05 level were isolated:

1. Androgynous females had significantly higher Attitudes Toward Women Scale scores than masculine males.

2. Masculine females had significantly higher Attitudes Toward Women Scale scores than masculine males.

3. Feminine females had significantly higher Attitudes Toward Women Scale scores than masculine males.

Hypothesis Two (See Table 2, p. 14)

Hypothesis Two was similarly disconfirmed. Androgynous graduate students of education were not significantly more liberal in their attitudes than were students with masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated sex role orientations. There was neither a significant difference for the variable sex role orientation nor was there a significant interaction

between sex role orientation and sex. However, female subjects were significantly more liberal in their attitudes than were male subjects ($F = 25.828$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$).

The result of the one way analyses showed that persons who perceived themselves as having a high degree of sex role flexibility were significantly more liberal in their attitudes toward women in an unspecified occupational role (as measured by the AWS) and in a specified occupational role (as measured by the WAMS) than persons who perceived themselves as having a low degree of sex role flexibility ($p < .01$) and ($p < .001$).

Persons who perceived themselves as highly androgynous were significantly more liberal in their attitudes toward women in an unspecified and specified occupational role than were persons who perceived themselves as having a low degree of androgyny ($p < .001$).

Persons who highly rated androgyny as a "positive" characteristic were significantly more liberal in their attitudes toward women in an unspecified and in a specified role than were persons who negatively rated androgyny as a "positive" characteristic ($p < .001$).

Discussion

The failure of this research to confirm the hypotheses raises the issue as to whether the possession of sex linked personality traits imply any particular type of attitude towards the role of women. Bem's assumption that androgynous persons possess more liberal beliefs about the nature of sex differences was not confirmed in this research. The disconfirmation of these hypotheses is particularly significant since

the researchers identified a subpopulation of 80 pure types from a sample of 201. These pure types represented an equal number of males and females whose scores were clearly associated with Bem's operational definitions of androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated sex role orientations.

The failure of the research to support the hypotheses has led the researcher to question the val dity of the BSRI. What does the BSRI really measure? The masculine and feminine items for the scale were generated from the ratings of 100 judges concerning the desirability in American society of 400 personality characteristics either "for a man" or "for a woman." A personality characteristic qualified as masculine if it was independently judged by both male and female judges to be signficantly more desirable for a man than a woman. A characteristic qualified as feminine if it was independently judged to be more desirable for a woman than for a man (Bem, 1974). Consequently, the pool of masculine adjectives reflects positive, society-sanctioned descr¹ptors associated with highly valued instrumental behavior -- acts as leader, aggressive, ambitious, analytical, assertive, strong personality, etc. The pool of feminine adjectives reflects traits that this work-oriented, competitive society values less -- affectionate, cheerful, childlike, flatterable, gullible, sensitive, shy. As Kensworthy (1979) noted, "In the process of operationalizing the concept of androgyny, Bem found it necessary to make use of the very sex role stereotypes she hoped to replace" (p. 234). The BSRI may be an instrument which is more reflective of self-esteem than sex role orientation since

high self-esteem persons attribute to themselves more positive traits than negative traits.

The findings of this research point out that the relationship between one's sex role orientation and attitudes toward women generally and in a managerial role is tempered by the degree to which one feels comfortable performing cross sex-typed activities and the degree to which one perceives androgyny as a positive characteristic. The BSRI gives no indication as to whether persons labeled as androgynous perceive their dual repertoire of behavior positively -- that is, facilitative and congruent with their personal and career goals. Although androgynous persons are both masculine and feminine in sex role orientation, it may well be that since only the masculine behaviors are valued, the feminine traits are interpreted by some of these androgynous persons as a negative dimension of their personality. The fact that androgynous persons were no more liberal than other sex role orientations may be related to the notion that androgynous persons, like others, receive no rewards for manifestations of their traditional feminine personality characteristics.

This discussion also reflects on the fact that previous research on androgyny has almost totally concentrated on individual need dispositions or the ideographic dimension rather than on nomothetic or institutional expectations. Perhaps situational variables influence an individual's attitudes and behaviors far more than one's personality trait. More research is needed into how such organizational variables such as superordinate, subordinate, and peer expectations, reward

systems, and status systems influence attitudes and behavior toward women. An androgynous individual in an organization which operates with traditional masculine or instrumental behavior may in fact exhibit those attitudes and behaviors which the situation demands (Lenny, 1979).

In summary, the author believes that androgyny is not the much-heralded solution to the pervasive problem associated with sex role discrimination and sex role stereotypes. This research illustrates that the one variable which differentiates individuals in regard to their stereotypic attitudes toward women is biological gender. Males are significantly less liberal than females in their beliefs about the appropriate societal role for women and women's appropriate occupational role. Knowing whether one is androgynous or not is not particularly relevant since persons classified as androgynous are no less aware or concerned about the social implications or ramifications of their sex role orientation than are masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated persons (Locksley and Cotten, 1979).

The author recommends that subsequent work in androgyny employ procedures which include not only an individual's perceptions of his/her sex role characteristics but also include such variables as one's attitudes and beliefs about the roles of women, the degree to which one feels comfortable performing both masculine and feminine behaviors, the degree to which androgyny is perceived as positive and facilitative, and nomothetic or situational expectations. The inclusion of such items in future research may assist in a clearer definition, understanding and identification of androgynous sex role orientation.

Table 1

Summary of the Analysis of Variance of Attitudes Toward Women Scale as Related to Sex Role Orientation and Sex of Subjects N = 80

Source of Variation	SSS	df	MS	F	Significance of F
Sex Role Orientation	165.233	3	55.078	0.511	NS
Sex	815.489	1	815.489	7.568	0.008
Interaction	860.363	3	286.788	2.661	0.054
Explained	1822.891	7	260.413		
Error	7758.520	72	107.757		
Total	9581.410	79	121.284		

Table 2

Summary of the Analysis of Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scale as Related to Sex Role Orientation and Sex of Subjects N = 80

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Significance of F
Sex Role Orientation	387.902	3	129.301	0.523	NS
Sex	2426.065	1	2426.065	9.822	0.002
Interaction	1187.083	3	395.694	1.602	NS
Explained	4071.086	7	581.583		
Error	17784.262	72	247.004		
Total	21855.348	79	276,650		

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